

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the : World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

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No. 40/25th Year

October 31st, 1958.

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Ecumenical Centre Launched in Wales

(Blaendulais) - A centre of training and experiment in Christian unity was launched in South Wales on October 24, with a three-day course for twenty-five youth leaders who are promoting an ecumenical youth movement in various parts of the country.

The centre, under the auspices of the Welsh Ecumenical Society, is not housed in a special building, but uses the existing facilities of a number of divided local churches "set among slag heaps, collieries, canteens, schools, welfare halls, pubs, clubs, shops and houses". Guests are given hospitality in valley homes, and existing buildings will be used for meetings.

"At Blaendulais", says a leaflet issued by the sponsoring ecumenical society, "we have a typical church situation - a Church very much divided by disagreements on faith and order, by a clinging to buildings and social traditions, by lingering memories of past quarrels, by differences in size of congregation and the resultant psychology, by language, and by personal tensions".

Future meetings at the centre are planned for 1959. Based on Bible Study and worship, they will be practical in emphasis and include a course on social and industrial church situations for theological students, a consultation on "Pastoral Care in the Welfare State" and a conference on "The Ministry of the Laity".

EPS, Geneva

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Japan's Christians Wary of Government "Moral Education"

(Tokyo) - Concern has been expressed in Japan's Christian community following a government decision to introduce "moral education" courses in schools. Christians and the churches feared a repetition of pre-war use of such courses to teach "ultra-nationalism".

A Moral Education Study Commission was appointed by the Education Association of Christian Schools in Japan and has reported that there is at present no cause for alarm. The commission said that the moral education regulations of the government's ministry of education do not, on the whole, threaten democracy. Under the regulations, religious education may be substituted for moral instruction in private schools. Christian schools do not have to institute the new courses.

Partly in response to the coming of the new moral education programme, the Education Association of Christian Schools is preparing new curriculum materials in an effort to integrate Christian education into the entire school programme where pupils desire it.

For the future, the commission suggested, the moral education measures should be watched closely in practice, to make sure that the old ultra-nationalism does not creep back into education.

EPS, Geneva

Cyprus Issue Debated in British Council of Churches

(Liverpool, England) - Disagreements over violence in Cyprus emerged when the British Council of Churches considered a statement on the situation in the island submitted by its International Department during its two-day meetings held in Liverpool last week, October 21 - 22.

Dr. Robert Mackie, chairman of the International Department, introduced a resolution expressing "horror" at the increase of violence and "the retaliation it provokes". He told the Council that the use of violence by Cypriots had produced unnecessary counter-violence by security forces. Dr. Mackie said the situation had led to incidents on the part of British troops of which "we are not proud, to say the least".

"It seems to me to be peculiarly terrible that young men on national service, acting on our behalf, losing their lives on our behalf, using violence on our behalf, are in this position at all", he said, "especially young men who cannot be expected to know of the long friendship between the Greek people and our own, or, indeed, the astonishing tenacity of the Greek people in the cause of what they believe to be freedom".

Dr. Mackie's resolution, and its implied criticism of the British armed forces, were opposed by Major-General D.J. Wilson-Haffenden, who said it was a soldier's duty to restore order and that cases of illegitimate use of force were invariably punished. He was supported by the Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr. S.F. Allison, whose son recently served in Cyprus. The bishop said he would not like the word "retaliation" to be used in any resolution on Cyprus.

Delegates to the meeting failed to agree on the subject. The Council finally adopted a substitute resolution that said: "The Council, distressed by the tragic situation which has developed in Cyprus, welcomes the discussions of the island's future between the members of NATO and urges the government to support any measures towards such a solution as may be agreed upon in the NATO discussions".

In action on another agenda item, the 110 delegates to the Liverpool meeting agreed to reconstitute the Council's standing conference on sex, marriage and the family with a view to combined consideration by the member churches of the moral, spiritual and social aspects of the practice of AID (artificial insemination by donor). Some members of the Council questioned whether it should pronounce on the subject when several British churches had already done so, but the general opinion was that something should be done to gather together existing findings and see what could be said by the churches together. EPS, Geneva

Spanish Church to Join World Presbyterian Alliance

(Barcelona) - During a special meeting of its pastors and lay representatives in the third week of October, the Spanish Evangelical Church decided to confirm its membership in the World Presbyterian Alliance.

Taking "The Gospel, the Power of God" as a main theme, the five-day meeting considered the role of the church in Spain and in the ecumenical movement.

Dr. Manuel Gutiérrez Marin of Barcelona was re-elected president.

EPS, Geneva

Brisk Demand for Bibles at Brussels Fair

(Brussels) - More than half a million free copies of selections from the scriptures, especially produced for the occasion, including the Sermon on the Mount and Bible tracts on the theme of the exhibition, were distributed in fifteen different languages during the Brussels World Fair.

Over 175 languages were covered in the 7,000 Bibles, New Testaments and Gospels sold at the Protestant Churches' Pavilion and at the "Expobible" stall erected below the large illuminated panel that flashed Bible texts.

The work of distribution was done by the Belgian Bible Society, with the help of local voluntary workers and was financed by national Bible Societies belonging to the United Bible Societies and by the Scripture Gift Mission of London. EPS, Geneva

Regional Churches in Germany Hold Ecumenical Meeting

(Arnoldshain) - Increasing coordination of work for Christian unity in Germany was reflected in the annual conference of ecumenical secretaries from various regional churches held at the Evangelical Academy in Arnoldshain, near Frankfurt, October 20 - 22.

Some delegates from churches in East Germany (DDR) were unable to obtain visas to attend, including Dr. Gerhard Brennecke, mission director from East Berlin, who was to speak.

The programme included addresses by Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, World Council of Churches general secretary, who described the relationships of the World Council with the Russian Orthodox Church, the proposals for integration of WCC and International Missionary Council and the ecumenical and missionary situation in Asia and Africa. Dr. Adolf Wischmann, president of the external relations office of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) described his visit to the Russian Orthodox Church.

The conference, which was planned as advance preparation for the WCC's Asian assembly in 1961, was presided over by Dr. Hanfried Krüger of the EKD's external relations office. EPS, Geneva

More Dutch Missionaries for New Guinea

(Oegstgeest, Netherlands) - The Netherlands Reformed Missionary Council will send twenty missionaries to New Guinea in early 1959.

A fund has been opened to strengthen the programme of training for indigenous pastors and church workers in West New Guinea. The Evangelical Christian Church in the area has requested help from its mother church in the Netherlands.

A theological college will be built at Hollandia. To provide money for the project a drive will be launched in the Netherlands in January 1959. "We shall find the money," said Secretary P.J. Mackaay of the Netherlands Reformed Missionary Council, "even if we have to borrow it". EPS, Geneva

Nuclear Weapons Controversy Perplexes Dutch Church

(Lage Vuursche, Netherlands) - Differences about nuclear weapons and their use have come to the surface in the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde) synod as the result of a report presented to it this month by a study commission presided over by Professor G.C. van Niftrik.

The commission had been asked to clarify the theological, political and ethical issues raised by the coming of the new weapons. Pointing out that there was no unanimity in the church, the commission said there were some Dutch Christians who rejected nuclear arms as "demonic" and others who refused to abstain from their use unilaterally because they believed they should be a deterrent against possible attack on the freedom and welfare of the West.

At the same time the commission told the church that entirely new issues were raised for Christians by the coming of the "bomb" and that it was no longer enough simply to quote the traditional right of the state to use the "sword" in defence.

The General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church received the report and asked for more complete theological examination of the problem by the commission, with special reference to questions of guilt, penitence and the infliction and suffering of wrong in relation to others. The commission was also asked to study the report on "Christians and War in an Atomic Age", presented at Nyborg, Denmark, last summer to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

Three hundred Japanese Christian leaders have met to honour Toyohiko Kagawa on his seventieth birthday. The celebration coincided with the publication of Kagawa's new book on "The Purpose of the Universe", a result of his reflections over the last seventeen years.

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The recently held triennial General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA heavily defeated a proposal to admit women as members of the Church's House of Deputies. The proposal had previously been rejected by the church's General Convention in 1952, 1949 and 1946.

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Hundreds of tributes paid to Henry Knox Sherrill at a dinner attended by 2,000 people, arranged when he retired as Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, included one from President Eisenhower and another from Roman Catholic Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston. Speakers included Dr. Roswell Barnes, executive secretary of the World Council of Churches in the USA. Bishop Sherrill is a president of the World Council of Churches.

* *

Dr. James I McCord, dean of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Austin, Texas, has been named president of Princeton Theological Seminary in succession to Dr. John A. Mackay, who retires in the autumn of 1959 on reaching the age of seventy. Dr. McCord's appointment by the Princeton Seminary's Board of Trustees is subject to confirmation by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in May, 1959.

* *

Dr. Robert H.W. Shepherd, former Principal of the Church of Scotland's Lovedale Missionary Institution in South Africa has been named Moderator-Designate of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly. The first missionary from Africa to take this office since 1922, Dr. Shepherd will become Moderator next May.

* *

His Majesty King Baudouin of Belgium was among prominent official visitors to the ecumenical pavilion of the Protestant Churches during the closing stages of the Brussels Universal Exhibition. Another distinguished guest of the pavilion during the same period was Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the German Federal Republic.

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The recently enlarged Conference of European Churches will hold its meeting on "European Christianity in Today's Secularised World" at Nyborg Strand, Denmark, January 6 - 9, 1960. The meeting will be attended by representatives from both member and non-member churches of the WCC, in Eastern and Western Europe.

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The International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), meeting at St. Louis, Mo., USA, has endorsed the proposed unification of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, scheduled to take place in 1961.

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The General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in the USA has adopted a resolution requesting "exploration of possible advantages and disadvantages" of union with the American Methodist Church. The EUB has almost 800,000 members and the Methodist Church over 9,600,000.

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To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Afrikaans Bible the British and Foreign Bible Society presented a specially bound and inscribed copy to Sir John Maud, British Commissioner Designate for Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland and United Kingdom High Commissioner Designate for the Union of South Africa. The presentation was made at Bible House, London, by Lord Verulam.

* *

The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Australia, the Most Rev. H.W.K. Mowll, died on October 24 at the age of 68. As Primate of Australia since 1948 he had taken a leading part in welding the widely diversified Anglican dioceses of Australia into closer unity and was the first President of the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches. The archbishop was a delegate to the first and second assemblies of the World Council of Churches and was a member of the Council's Central Committee at the time of his death.

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An "Alexander Campbell Professorship" is to be established at the University of Chicago in the field of American Christianity. Campbell was largely responsible for the formation of the Disciples of Christ, founded as a movement on American soil in the 1830s. Two other new chairs will honour Edgar Johnson Goodspeed, a Baptist, and William Ellery Channing, a Unitarian.

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Fourteen cooperating Protestant church social action agencies are making available all over America a report on the voting record of United States congressmen in preparation for the exercise of responsible voting by citizens in the US congressional elections on November 4. Among issues selected in the voting record are foreign aid and civil rights. Denominations included among those cooperating are the Methodists, American Baptists, United Lutherans, American Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ and Protestant Episcopal Church.

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The Latin America Committee of the Lutheran World Federation has decided to raise about \$200,000 to help Lutheran churches in thirteen Latin American countries during the next twelve months. A proportion of the money will be used to strengthen training of South American theological students at Sao Leopoldo in Brazil, Buenos Aires and Neuendettelsau, Germany.

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The third Latin American Lutheran Conference will be held at Buenos Aires, April 14-17, 1959, with the theme "The Eternal Message for a Continent in Transition"

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President Theodor Heuss of the West German Federal Republic presented a cheque for five thousand pounds (\$14,000) to the Dean of Coventry as a contribution toward windows in the new Cathedral's Chapel of Unity. The gift was made during the president's state visit to England.

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In protest against his reception by British Immigration authorities, Pastor Martin Niemöller left England last week, immediately after arriving by air. He was on his way to several speaking engagements. Dr. Niemöller said he could not accept future invitations to England unless he was assured that he could enter the country without difficulty. The explanation given by British officials in Bonn is that there must have been misunderstanding when Pastor Niemöller refused to answer routine questions.

* *

The next synod meeting of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) will be held at the beginning of 1960. The agenda includes confirmation practice in the member churches, their attitude to the "atomic question", problems raised in connection with military chaplaincies and the outcome of negotiations between the church and the East German (DDR) government.

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Under the title "The Bible in Colour", an exhibition of works by the painter Marc Chagall will be held in Düsseldorf, Germany, October 31 - December 1.

EPS, Geneva

DocumentGerman Theologians Issue Positive Statement on
Holy Communion Agreements

The document reproduced here marks an attempt within the confessionally diversified churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany to arrive at a positive doctrinal consensus on the theological meaning of the Lord's Supper

Between 1947 and 1957 the question of Holy Communion was discussed by the logians belonging to the Lutheran, Reformed and "Union" churches. They had been appointed to undertake the task by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). Their findings were published in the form of theses at the last meeting of the Commission on November 1 and 2, 1957. On July 25, 1958, the Council and Church-Conference of the EKD received the report, which was presented by three members of the Commission. The Council of the EKD decided to pass the theses on to the church leaders, the theological faculties, the theological colleges and the public. The text of the theses is as follows:

What do we, as members of the one Apostolic Church, understand as
essential in what the Bible says about Holy Communion?

First Thesis

- (1) The Communion, which we celebrate, is based on its institution by Jesus Christ our Lord, who died for us and rose again, and is in accordance with his commandment.
- (2) In the Communion the Risen Lord invites His followers to His table, thus enabling them to participate here and now in the future fellowship of the Kingdom of God.

Second Thesis

- (1) In the Communion Jesus Christ Himself acts, within and under what the Church does, as the Lord who is present in the Holy Spirit, through His Word.
- (2) Like preaching, baptism and the special promise of the forgiveness of sins, Communion is one of the ways in which Christ bestows upon us the gifts of the Gospel of salvation.

Third Thesis

- (1) Communion is an act of worship by the congregation assembled in the name of Jesus.
- (2) In the Communion the Holy Supper is indissolubly bound up with the oral preaching of the redemptive death of Jesus.
- (3) Accompanied by prayer, thanksgiving and praise, bread and wine are taken, the words appointed by Our Lord are pronounced, and the bread and wine are distributed to the congregation.
- (4) In the Communion we commemorate the death of Christ, through which God has reconciled the world to Himself once and for all. In it we confess the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst and joyfully await His return, as those called to share His glory in the final consummation.

Fourth Thesis

The words spoken by Our Lord Jesus Christ when the bread and wine are offered tell us what He himself gives in this Supper to all who participate in it. He, the crucified and risen Lord, permits us to participate, through the bread and the wine, in His body and His blood given for all, thus enabling us through the Holy Spirit to share in the victory of His Lordship, so that through faith in His promise we may receive forgiveness of sins, life and bliss.

Fifth Thesis

It is therefore not appropriate to interpret what happens in the Communion in any of the following ways:

- (a) to teach that, through the words pronounced by Our Lord when He instituted the Last Supper, the bread and wine are transformed into a supernatural substance, and cease to be bread and wine;
- (b) to teach that a repetition of the act of salvation takes place in the Communion;
- (c) to teach that the matter presented in the reception of Holy Communion is either purely natural or purely supernatural;
- (d) to teach that two parallel but separate processes take place, one a physical and the other a spiritual form of eating;
- (e) to teach that physical participation in the Communion ensures salvation, or that participation in the Body and Blood of Christ is a purely spiritual procedure.

Sixth Thesis

- (1) Jesus Christ, who has saved us from the wrath of God, is both the beginning and the Lord of a new creation.
- (2) Through Him we, who receive His Body and Blood, are united in His Body, the Church, and participate in the New Covenant which God has instituted through the blood of Jesus.
- (3) The Communion places us in a fellowship of brethren and thus proves that the things which enslave and divide us in this present world have been broken down in Christ, and that, amid the sinners whom He has redeemed, the Lord has inaugurated a new humanity.

Seventh Thesis

- (1) The Communion places us on the way of Christ's Cross. The Cross leads us to the reality of this world. Where we are weak, there the grace of God is strong. If we die, we live with Him. His victory is still concealed by temptation and suffering. That is why the Lord feeds us through His Supper, in order to strengthen us for the struggle into which he sends His people, and to arm us against sentimentalism and indolence, so as to prevent us from indulging in false dreams about the future or from throwing up the gauntlet in despair.
- (2) In the fellowship bestowed by Him in Communion we are brothers. This fellowship becomes living reality only in the love with which He first loved us. He, the righteous, has received us, the unrighteous. He the free, has received us, who are bound. He, who is exalted, has received us who are debased. Therefore we also must share all that we are and have with those who need us.

Eighth Thesis

- (1) Faith receives what is promised to it and builds on this promise, not on its own merit.
- (2) The Word of God warns us against irreverence for or misuse of the Holy Communion, so that we do not sin against the greatness of this gift and bring down God's judgment upon us.
- (3) Because the Lord is rich toward all who call upon Him, all the members of His Church are called to the Last Supper, and forgiveness of sins is promised to all who long for His righteousness.

EPS, Geneva

Corrections

"Evangelikus Elet" is the paper of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, not the Reformed Church as stated on page 306, EPS N° 39.

Students in the Graduate School of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey include some from united churches, not unitarian as stated on page 290, EPS N° 37.

